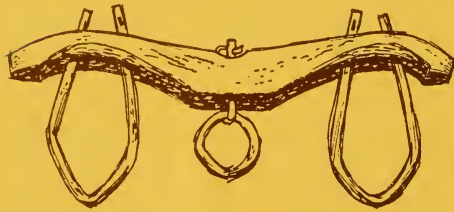


973.7L63
B2H32a

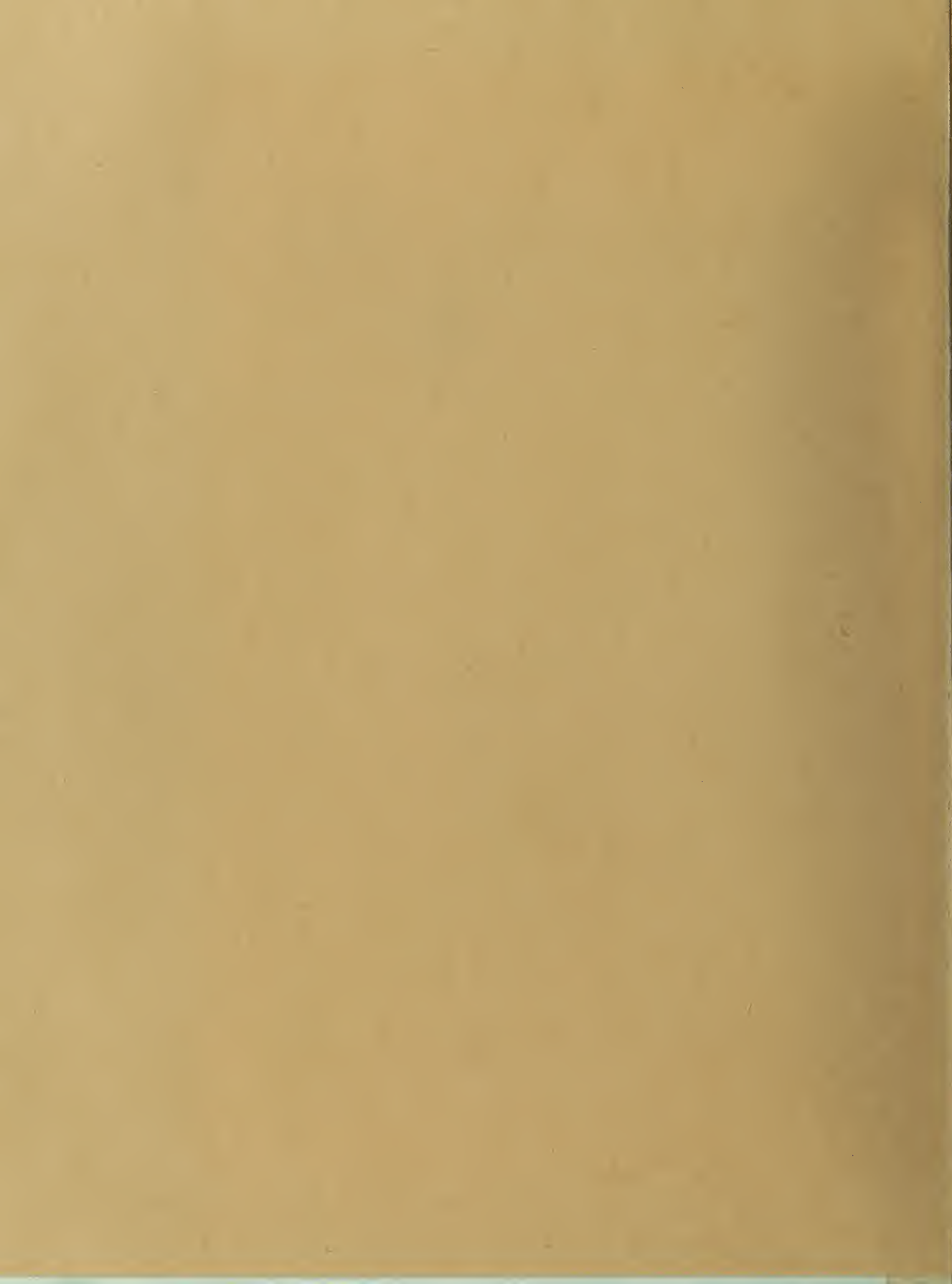
Hay, John
Abraham Lincoln (Letter from
Hay to Herndon Sept. 5, 1866

LINCOLN ROOM
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
LIBRARY



MEMORIAL
the Class of 1901

founded by
HARLAN HOYT HORNER
and
HENRIETTA CALHOUN HORNER



Abraham Lincoln

by

John Hay






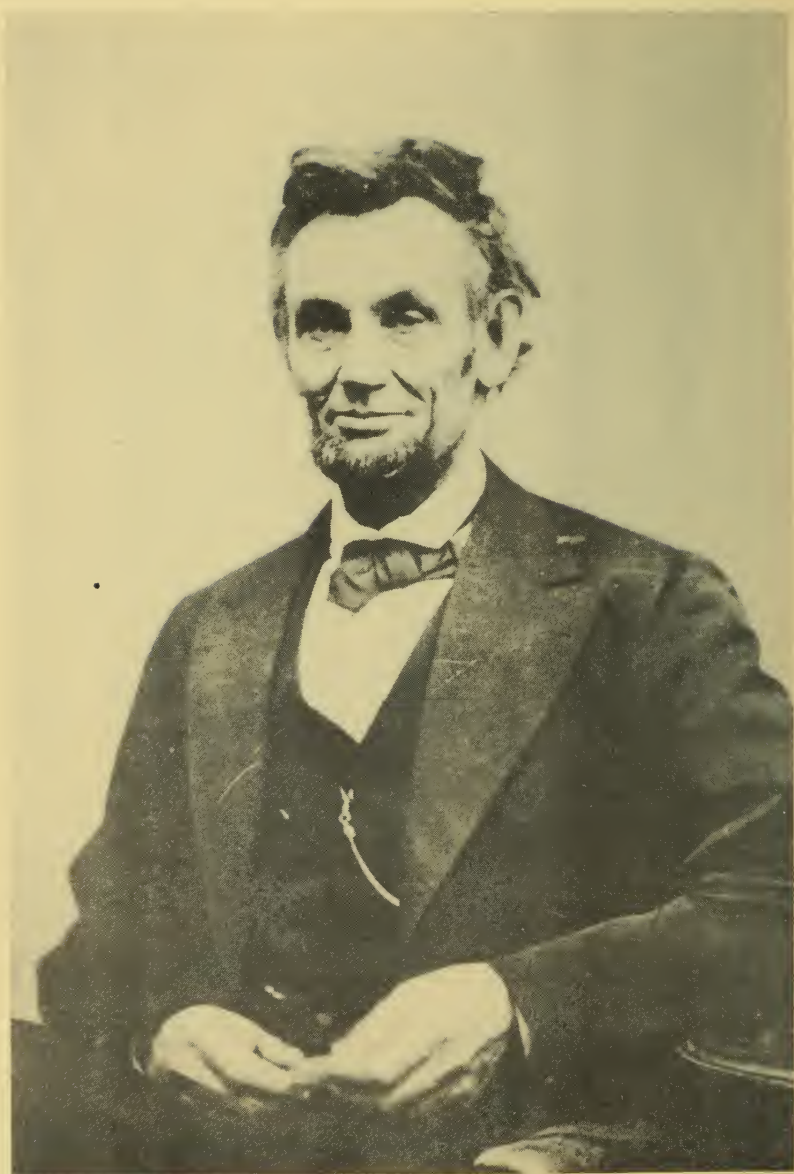
John Jay

973.7263
B2 H32 a

Lincoln Room



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2012 with funding from .
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign



Legation of the United States
Paris. September 5. 1866.

My Dear Mr. Herndon

I am so
constantly busy that I have
had no quiet day in which I
write you what you desired
in your letter several months
ago. I have been Chargé
d'Affaires nearly all
summer, my day filled

with official business
and my night with
social engagements
equally imperative. Even
now, I write because I
am ashamed to wait
any longer and have
a few minutes disposable.
I will answer your questions
as you put them without
any attempt at arrangement.
Lincoln used to go to

bed ordinarily from ten to eleven
o'clock unless he happened to
be kept up by important news,
in which case he would frequently
remain at the War Department
until 1 or 2. He rose early.
When he lived in the country at
Soldiers Home, he would be up
and dressed, eat his breakfast
(which was extremely frugal -
an egg, a piece of toast Coffee &c)
and ride into Washington, all
before 8 o'clock. In the
winter at the White House

he was not quite so early.
He did not sleep very well
but spent a good while in
bed. Tad usually slept
with him. He would lie
around the office until he
fell asleep & Lincoln would
shoulder him and take him
off to bed.

He pretended to begin
business at ten o'clock
in the morning, but in
reality the anterooms and
halls were full before that

how - people anxious to get the
first axe ground. He was
extremely unmethodical: it was
a four-years struggle on Nicolay's
part and mine to get him to
adopt some systematic rules.
He would break through every
regulation as fast as it was made.
Anything that kept the people
themselves away from him he
disapproved - although they
nearly annoyed the life out of
him by unreasonable complaints
or requests.

He wrote very few letters. He did not read one in fifty that he received. At first we tried to bring them to his notice, but at last he gave the whole thing over to me, and signed without reading them the letters I wrote in his name. He wrote perhaps half-a-dozen a week - himself - not more.

Nicolay received members of Congress, & other visitors who had business with the Executive Office, communicated ~~with~~ the Senate and House the

messages of the President, & exercised a general supervision over the business.

I opened and read the letters, answered them, looked over the newspapers, supervised the clerks who kept the records and in Nicolay's absence did his work also.

When the President had any rather delicate matter to manage at a distance from Washington, he very rarely wrote, but sent Nicolay or me.

The House remained full of people nearly all day. At noon the President took a little lunch - a biscuit, a glass of milk in

winter, some fruit or grapes
in summer. He dined at
pr. 5 to 6. & we went off to
our dinner also.

Before dinner was over
members & senators would come
back & take up the whole
evening. Sometimes, though rarely
he shut himself up & would see
no one. Sometimes he would
run away to a lecture or
concert or theatre for the
sake of a little rest.

He was very abstemious —
ate less than any one I know.
Drank nothing but water — not
from principle, but because he
did not like wine or spirits.

Once, in rather dark days early in the
war, a Temperance Committee came to him
& said the reason we did not win was
because our army drank so much whiskey
as to bring down the curse of the Lord upon
them. He said only that it was rather
unfair on the part of the aforesaid Curse,
as the other side drank more and worse
whiskey than ours did.


He read very little. Scarcely
ever looked into a newspaper-
unless I called his attention to
an article on some special
subject. He frequently said
"I know more about that than any
of them." It is absurd to
call him a modest man. No
great man was ever modest.
It was his intellectual arrogance
and unconscious assumption of
superiority that men like Chase
and Sumner never could forgive.

I cant write any more
today. I may see you before
long — I dont know — & so
I wont waste time by telling
you what you must know
as well as I do.

I believe Lincoln is well
understood by the people. Miss
Nancy Bancroft & the rest of
that patent leather kid glove set
know no more of him than
an owl does of a comet,
blazing into his blinking eyes.

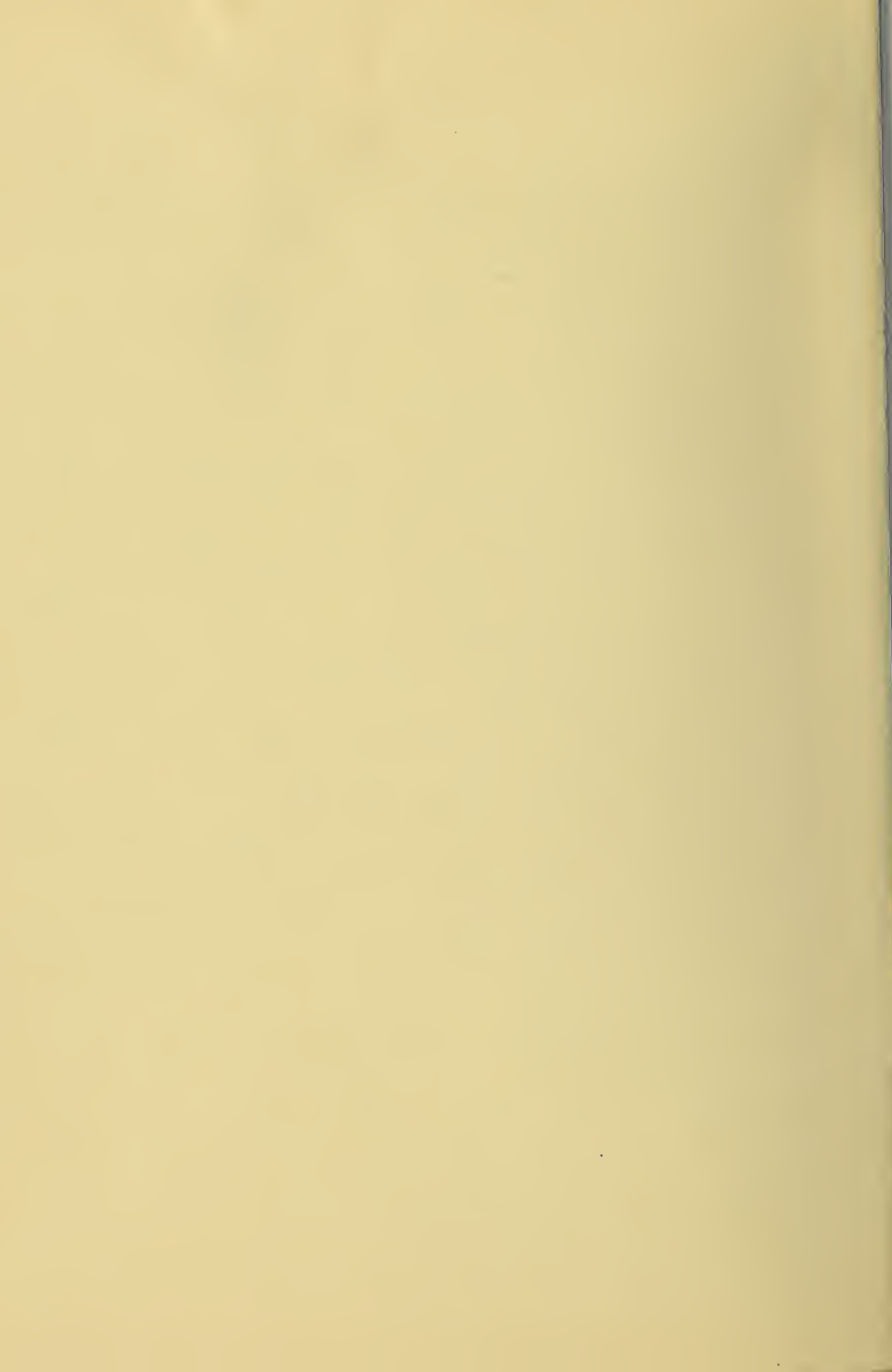
Bancroft's address was a disgraceful exhibition of ignorance and prejudice. His effeminate nature shrinks instinctively from the contact of a great reality like Lincoln's character.

I consider Lincoln Republican in incarnation - with all its faults and all its virtues. As in spite of ^{some} rudeness, Republicanism is the sole hope of a sick world, so Lincoln with all his foibles, is the greatest character since Christ.

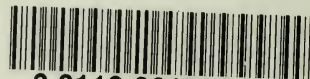
Yours


Reproduced from the Original
In the Collection of
LINCOLNIANA
Formed by Wm. H. Herndon
Now in the Possession of
GABRIEL WELLS





UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA
973.7L63B2H32A C001
ABRAHAM LINCOLN NY



3 0112 031794446